

**The purpose to which we commit:** We teach, learn, lead, and serve, connecting people with the University of Wisconsin, and engaging with them in transforming lives and communities.

### THRIVING YOUTH, FAMILIES & COMMUNITIES ●

focuses on the conditions that support and enhance community members' growth and support, civic engagement and community cohesion.

### STRONG ECONOMIES ●

focuses on workforce development and support, family financial capabilities, and a locally supportive workforce and business climate.

### RESILIENT & PRODUCTIVE ENVIRONMENTS ●

focuses on the protection and sustainable management of built and natural environments.

### FOOD SAFETY, SECURITY & HEALTH ●

focuses on the availability of and access to nutritious, affordable and safe food, and decision-making regarding healthy behavior and access to medical care.

Thriving Youth,  
Families & Communities

Strong Economies

Resilient & Productive  
Environments

Food Safety, Security  
& Health

**Individual program  
areas functioning  
together to promote  
the well-being of the  
community...**

**UW-Extension, here for YOU!**

### Educational Priorities:

This report features a snapshot of impactful programming conducted in 2016 by the UW-Extension Fond du Lac County office within the educational priorities described here. Residents access UW-Extension for educational programs addressing the needs of youth, individuals, families, businesses, farms and communities. We partner with local neighborhoods, communities, organizations, volunteers, businesses, and state/federal agencies to deliver research based education. We thank the various branches of Fond du Lac County government for their steadfast support and encouragement. We invite you to learn more about us online at [fonddulac.uwex.edu](http://fonddulac.uwex.edu) or follow us on Facebook and Twitter!

*Due to reduced state funding, UW-Extension statewide will be reorganizing in 2017. UW-Extension will remain a contemporary, dynamic educational institution in the 21st century. We will continue to adapt, respond, and maximize our resources. Updates will be communicated with Fond du Lac County residents and our partners as the new model is put into place.*

## Running a Meeting, Taking Minutes, Handling Money - Can Kids do That? ●

Yes, they can do that and much more in 4-H! The youth who are club officers manage the meeting and develop many life skills in the process. They are honing skills in being organized when putting the agenda together. The young people are developing skills in diplomacy while using parliamentary procedure. As they handle fundraisers they practice accurate record keeping. When reporting on past events they are exercising good communication. As they interact with others in the 4-H club meeting they are improving their social skills. Because community service is a cornerstone of the 4-H program, children are learning about the needs of their community and realizing the value of giving back.

Each year, to help new 4-H club officers understand their roles and responsibilities, Fond du Lac County 4-H Teen Leaders Association members conduct a countywide club officer workshop. Teen leaders use their own experience as an officer and other resources to plan

the sessions. In addition to learning specific officer roles, each year a topic is covered that pertains to all officers. This year officers learned about applying life skills to their club meetings and activities. They learned the value of WOW statements to tell their story. In a strong impactful WOW statement, the youth communicates the action they took, the results that happened, and the life skill they are developing. An example is: We recruited potential 4-H members by presenting detailed information about our club at 4-H Open House, which was attended by 50 families. Four potential new members were identified. We practiced good communication skills when we spoke with people.



## Introducing the New Crops and Soils Area Agent ●

Dr. Loretta Ortiz-Ribbing has joined UW-Extension Fond du Lac County as the Crops & Soils Area Agent. Her long agricultural career includes working in academia, industry, government, and most importantly Extension and outreach in Illinois, Indiana, Minnesota and now Wisconsin. As a retired assistant professor at UW-River Falls, Dr. Ortiz-Ribbing taught organic production systems, sustainable agriculture, weed control, and integrated pest management.

Dr. Ortiz-Ribbing has a 50:50 shared appointment with UW-Extension Dodge County providing educational outreach opportunities and support in the areas of agronomic and horticultural crop systems. She plans to encourage and promote cross-county programming.

Since her start date of June 1, 2016, Dr. Ortiz-Ribbing has helped facilitate, advise, coordinate, promote, and moderate 23 educational events. Dr. Ortiz-Ribbing partnered with Fond du Lac County Visions Coop and with the Forage Council to host an Agronomy Field Day on September 1st with the theme "From the Ground Up." About 90 producers listened to speakers discussing cover crops, soil mycorrhizae, root systems, and seed treatments. Dr. Ortiz-Ribbing spoke about beneficial mycorrhizal fungi and some results of her collaborative research showing cover crops might help prevent some soilborne plant diseases.

## Master Gardeners



The Fond du Lac County Master Gardener organization has over 60 certified Master Gardener Volunteers. The goal of the Master Gardener program is to train Volunteers to assist UW-Extension educators. To become a certified Master Gardener Volunteer, an individual must take the initial Master Gardener training program, pass the exam, and complete 24 hours of volunteer service. Once certified, Master Gardener Volunteers must perform 24 hours of volunteer service and complete 10 hours of continuing education annually, to maintain their certification.

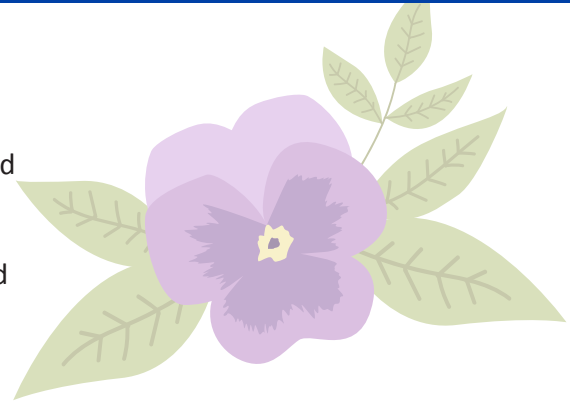
Master Gardener Volunteers serve as the front line to the public by answering home garden related questions. The Master Gardener Volunteers Horticulture Helpline runs two days a week, from late Spring through Fall.

The Master Gardener Volunteers work can be seen throughout the county, in the many public spaces and places they have enhanced. This includes the gardens on the UW Fond du Lac campus, Free Spirit Riders garden, North Fond du Lac garden, and other locations.

Master Gardener Volunteers are also active at several area elementary schools. Children are taught plant parts, what makes a plant grow, and what pollinators are. In the Spring Master Gardener Volunteers spend time planting and transplanting seeds and working in the garden with the young students. By Fall, when kids are back in school, it's

time to harvest what they planted. Master Gardener Volunteers logged over 1975 volunteer hours at the schools in 2016. More importantly, over 1055 children were taught and experienced gardening first hand.

Master Gardener Volunteers are more than the average gardener. It is their knowledge, skill in gardening, and giving back to the community that distinguishes UW-Extension Master Gardeners.



## Latinos Unidos in Fond du Lac



Latinos Unidos in Fond du Lac is an initiative to connect, inform, and empower Latinos in the Fond du Lac area. Monthly meetings are being held at UW-Extension Fond du Lac County. In these meetings Latinos have the opportunity to share experiences, assume leadership roles, brainstorm on ways to address their needs, plan upcoming events, learn, and network. Latinos have been encouraged to add an educational topic to the meetings. Presentations have included topics such as “know your rights”, life insurance, taxes and loans and entrepreneurial opportunities.

Over 100 Latinos have participated in community events hosted by Latinos Unidos in Fond du Lac. A group of 20 members continue to participate in the monthly meetings. All participants expressed they have learned something new at each one of the meetings and would like to continue participating and stay involved to help the group grow. This is a great example of community working together to learn from each other, resolve community issues, and creating and maintaining positive relationships.





## Co-Parenting for a Lifetime ●

When a family goes through divorce or separation, it can be difficult to adjust to the changes. UW-Extension offers education and resources to educate parents and children about the impact of the family transition and adjustment to their new life as co-parents. Further, co-parenting education and resources are needed by families that have children, yet were not married to one another. In 2016, Fond du Lac County data notes there were 535 marriages, 540 divorces with 423 (78 percent) of the divorces involving minor children, plus 214 paternity (never married) cases.

“Living Apart-Parenting Together”, a co-parent educational course for court ordered divorcing or separating individuals with children, is collaboratively taught by Fond du Lac County Family Court Services and UW-Extension Fond du Lac County Family Living

Programs on a monthly basis. The program helps parents understand the impact of divorce on their children and acknowledge the important role both parents continue to play in their children’s lives. In 2016, the program worked with 261 individuals with approximately 257 minor children involved.

“Stay civil and get along. The kids are number one.” - *Fond du Lac County Parent*

“Keeping It About the Kids”, collaboratively taught by the aforementioned partnership, provides co-parent education for court ordered paternity cases. The program emphasizes early child



Source: State Co-Parenting Family Living Team

development, and the important co-parent role played in their children’s lives. In 2016, the program reached 56 individuals with approximately 40 minor children involved.

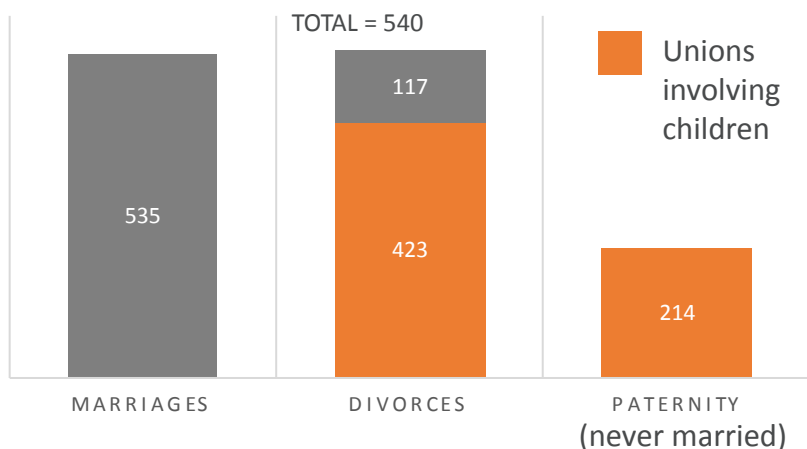
Many parents take away the message that improving communication and handling issues without involving the children is optimal.

Co-parenting education participants indicated the classes were more useful than any other source of co-parenting information they have access to.

Additionally, statewide outcomes, in which Fond du Lac County is represented, showed 94 percent of class participants reported they were less likely to argue with their child’s other parent in front of their child as a result of the class.

***In healthy relationships,  
children thrive.***

### 2016 FOND DU LAC COUNTY MARRIAGES & DIVORCES



Source: FdL Co. Clerk of Court, FdL County Clerk’s office (2016)

## HealthYouth ● ●

The 2014 Fond du Lac County Community Health Assessment found a variety of issues concerning youth in the county, including high overweight and obesity rates (36 percent), alcohol use (24 percent), and suicide considerations/attempts (21 percent). From this data, the recommendation was to focus on four priority areas: obesity, mental health, dental health, and substance use/abuse among the student and adult populations.

Using the six identified areas of BAM, Agnesian HealthCare created the HealthYouth program to address some of the most pressing issues of Fond du Lac County youth. Agnesian HealthCare teamed up with the FoodWise program and the Fond du Lac School District to offer the program to 4th grade students at Chegwin, Parkside, and Riverside Elementary Schools.

reading labels on snack foods in the classroom and 60 percent of teachers observed or heard comments from the students about changes made in the variety or amounts of fruits eaten at home or school.

“My students are more aware of label reading and amount of sugar in snacks. A parent commented that her son had taught his older sister how to read the sugar grams and divide by four to figure out the teaspoons.”

– 4th grade teacher

The CDC’s BAM (Body and Mind) interactive and educational resources give students in 5th through 8th grades the information they need to make healthy lifestyle choices. It focuses on disease, food and nutrition, physical activity, safety, stress, and the body.

The program helped youth become more aware of important issues, including dental hygiene, talking to someone if they need to, wearing bike helmets, and label reading/ healthy eating, as

examples. Following the series, a total of 836 contacts were made with 111 students. One hundred percent of participating schools stated they were satisfied with the program and would like it repeated next year. Sixty percent of teaching staff reported observing more students



## Pesticide Applicator Training with Simultaneous Spanish Translation ● ●

Partnering and collaborating with Glenn Nice, Dominic Ledesma, Annie Deutsch, and Araceli Oswald, Dr. Loretta Ortiz-Ribbing helped to pilot a new pesticide applicator training designed specifically for Spanish-speaking individuals.



The training was presented in English and simultaneously interpreted into Spanish by a team of professional language interpreters. Dr. Ortiz-Ribbing taught the Labels, Personal Safety, and Off-Target sections. The program also provided the six participants training in the new Worker Protection Standards, using the EPA approved training video (Spanish). The Private Applicator certification exam was provided if participants wished to take it.



## Junior Master Gardeners ● ● ●



There is strong evidence that experiencing gardens increase participating children's fruit/vegetable consumption and willingness to try new foods, as well as increase children's physical activity levels. The Junior Master Gardener Program (JMG), a gardening and nutrition program for youth 8 to 12 years old, is a partnership between Master Gardener Volunteers,

FoodWise (formerly Wisconsin Nutrition Education Program), and Family Living Programs. The program has been offered to area youth, including Boys and Girls Club participants, for the past 15+ years. It provides the full gardening experience for participants, from seed to plate. In addition, the youth participated in a community service project by donating to the food pantry, working with guest speakers and taking field trips in the community.

test evaluations showed 97 percent of youth were willing to try new fruits and vegetables, 68 percent said they would try the new foods again, and 66 percent said they would ask for it at the grocery store. Following the series, 100 percent of parents reported the value of the program as "good" or "excellent" and 80 percent reported their child is more willing to eat new foods, asks to make new healthy recipes at home and seems to understand more about healthy eating and MyPlate.

"I liked the hands-on activities. My girls enjoyed getting their hands dirty in the garden and in the kitchen. I believe experience is a great teaching tool." – *JMG parent*

Patty Percy (Community Gardens Coordinator) and Amanda Miller (FoodWise Coordinator/Family Living Educator), assisted by Master Gardener Volunteers, made 136 contacts during the 12 week program. Taste-



**In 2016, 85 families rented garden plots, 20 of these families were 1st time gardeners.**

## Community Gardens ● ● ●

The spring and summer of 2016 were exceptional for growing. Weather and rainfall was perfect until the very end of the season brought heavy rains. One hundred thirty-three plots ranging from 20x20' to 20x80' were rented out to 85 different Fond du Lac County families in 2016. The unused areas of the garden were able to be cover cropped utilizing grant money from Fond du Lac County Master Gardeners and the Fond du Lac Area Foundation. The goal of the cover crop seeding was to keep down the weeds and help improve the soil structure. A special thank you to the Master Gardener Volunteers who were able to help with the annual Community Garden walkthroughs and the Second Harvest that reaped a bountiful harvest of crops for donation to the Solutions Center. Onion, squash, tomatillos, beets, carrots, Swiss chard, hot and green peppers, turnips, brussels sprouts, and kohlrabi were all gratefully received by this worthy local cause.

## Finding Diversity in Small Business Development ● ●

UW-Extension and community partners observed African-American, Asian, Latino, Native American, and immigrant residents were using existing business development services less than native-born, White residents. Because of this need, UW-Extension Fond du Lac County initiated a series of Business Success interviews to learn from the more than 50 minority business owners in the county. With assistance from

Ripon College student researchers, 35 interviews were completed in English, Spanish, and Mandarin about the entrepreneurs' experiences owning businesses, reasons for establishing firms here, strength of community connections, barriers encountered, and preferences for learning about business development.

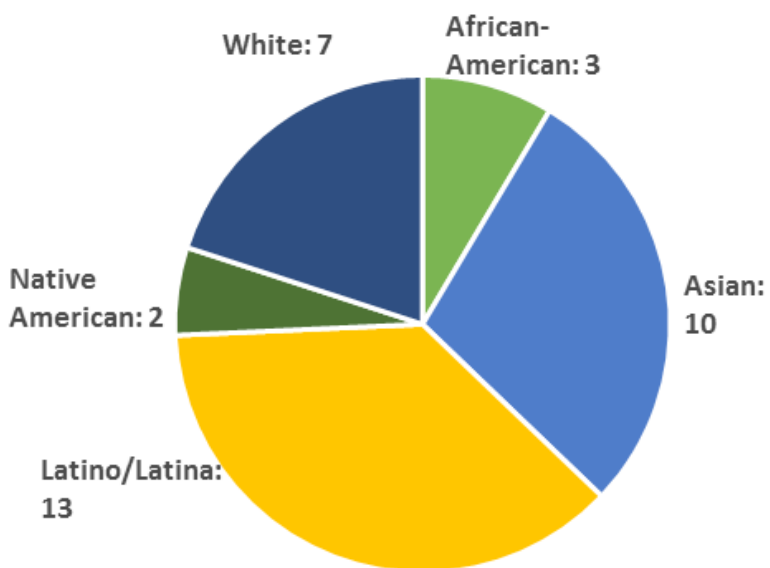
Initial conclusions showed:

- 1) Researchers who matched potential participants in race, ethnicity, and language built trust quickly with study participants.
- 2) These entrepreneurs were not noticeably different from "average" business owners in most ways, in spite of running their business in a second language where they are visibly different from the majority of residents around them.
- 3) Even though most business owners in the study did not work with local business development organizations, they had questions that IGNITE! partners could answer and want to receive information. Email was the method of communication preferred by most.

4) In spite of national data that showed minority-owned firms have been outperforming non-minority owned firms, there is little reliable information available about minority-owned businesses in Wisconsin and no systems in place for capturing it.

As this research is shared and implemented over the coming years, IGNITE! business success partners and other business development professionals in the state will have a better idea of how to build relationships with minority business owners and maximize economic growth for all.

### Race or Ethnicity of Participants



Type of Business	Number
Restaurants & Bakeries	16
Professional Services	5
Personal Care	5
Service Businesses	5
Retail Stores	2
Other	2



Students from minority backgrounds make connections with area minority entrepreneurs. Source: Ripon College



## Moving Forward-Farm Business Succession

Farmers make decisions every day to improve their farm business and provide their family with a home and lifestyle they want. However, many of them have not planned for the family's and/or farm operation's long term sustainability regarding farm succession and retirement.

Farm succession from one generation to the next can be overwhelming for families when added to the daily decisions necessary to run the farm. There are many issues and challenges for farmers when it comes to retirement and farm succession: attachment to the land, both financially and emotionally; attachment to farming; variable

income due to high and low commodity prices; and the farm business operation itself. Based on a pre-meeting evaluation individuals indicated financial security in the later years (88 percent), financial viability/sustainability of the farm for the next generation (64 percent), and how to transfer the farm (80 percent) were the items that concerned them the most about planning for the later years. They also shared their farm succession plan is most vulnerable to "poor communication/poor conflict management."

UW-Extension Fond du Lac County developed a three-day farm succession series focusing on farm transfer, farm retirement, and

estate planning. Fifty-one different individuals attended one, two, or three days of the meeting series. Based on post-meeting evaluations, participants (n=49) increased their knowledge 1.18 points (retirement), 1.55 points (farm transfer) and 1.36 points (estate planning) on a 5 point scale.

UW-Extension Fond du Lac County continues working with farm families one-on-one to help provide guidance and resources for farm business succession. Meetings are facilitated to help individuals develop their personal and business goals, both long term and short term, and how to best achieve those goals while maintaining



Photo Credit: Creative Commons

## UW-Extension Fond du Lac County Staff

Pam Bartoli, *Previous Program Assistant*  
Tina Engelhardt, *Program Assistant*  
Angela Folske, *Program Assistant*  
Ann Kaiser, *Program Assistant*  
Tina Kohlman, *Dairy & Livestock Agent*  
Gloria Kelroy, *Retired Program Assistant*  
Kelly Lamb, *Program Assistant (beginning March 2017)*  
Amanda Miller, *FoodWise Educator & Family Living Educator*  
Pamela Nelson, *FoodWise Nutrition Educator*  
Araceli Oswald, *Bilingual 4-H Youth Development Assistant*

Patty Percy, *Community Garden Coordinator*  
Dr. Loretta Ortiz-Ribbing, *Crops & Soils Area Agent*  
Denise Retzleff, *4-H Youth Development Educator & Co-Department Head*  
Kris Schaeffer, *Retired FoodWise Nutrition Educator*  
Michelle Tidemann, *Family Living Educator & Co-Department Head*  
Diana Hammer Tscheschlok, *Community, Natural Resource & Economic Development Educator*  
Mike Winkler, *Previous Entrepreneurship Educator*